



Participation

Lake Louise redevelopment

Parks Canada wants public involved in planning

The Lake Louise planning studies have progressed through Stage One, information exchange, with the production of a discussion paper. This paper examines the broad development approaches to be examined and discussed among the various concerned individuals and public and private interest groups in the weeks ahead. It does not spell out precise plans, but presents broad concepts and ideas for discussion. The interim report to be produced in September at the end of Stage Two will outline specific development options.

The planning process is divided into three technical planning stages, with two periods designated for public review and discussion. Each stage is initiated by a written document (i.e. Stage Two, initiated by the discussion paper) summarizing the information and level of understanding upon which to proceed to the next stage. The object is to complete the entire process by the end of 1978.

The major issues and preliminary concepts and options from the discussion paper prepared by the consulting firms responsible for studying land use, transportation and utilities are presented below. The paper is called *Discussion Paper, Lake Louise Visitors Centre Planning Study, June 1978*. Copies of the discussion paper may be seen at the following university libraries—University of British Columbia, University of Alberta (Edmonton), University of Calgary, University of Lethbridge, Red Deer College, and the University of Waterloo. Banff Public Library has a copy and others have been deposited with the Archives of the Canadian Rockies in Banff National Park, the National Archives in Ottawa, and the Lake Louise storefront operation. Parks Canada's Western Regional office in Calgary has further copies which may be borrowed.

Services—facilities presently inadequate

Almost everyone agrees that some development is required to improve the existing developed environment and to facilitate the increasing demand for visitor services. A number of present services and facilities for both visitors and residents at Lake Louise are poor and inadequate to cope with the increasing number of visitors and their needs. However, the potential exists for quality development aimed at enhancing visitor experience in the park. To achieve the level of services and quality aspired to will require imagination, creativity, and change in traditional approaches to programming, design and management on the part of all parties involved. This will present a challenge to Parks Canada, the Lake Louise business community, interested associations, and provincial government agencies.

Development options for Lake Louise should evolve within a regional context. National parks provide only one opportunity for accommodating public demands for outdoor recreation and tourism. Other opportunities for both summer and winter recreation developments outside the national park boundaries offer practical and often more desirable recreational development alternatives. It is necessary to take account of existing and proposed developments in southwest Alberta and southeast British Columbia in considering further development within Banff National Park and specifically at Lake Louise.

Visitor Centre vs Townsite

Lake Louise can fulfill a special role within the national park as a visitors centre rather than another townsite. There is no need to duplicate the full range of recreational and service facilities found in Banff, Jasper, and beyond the park.

A townsite such as Banff or Jasper provides a comprehensive range of services and facilities to serve the visitor as well as the resident. This requires the provision of the commercial and institutional activities normal to any permanent community, supported by a population which owns houses and business, makes long term investments in improving and expanding their role in the community and even retires in

that community. By comparison, a visitors centre is not considered a permanent comprehensive community. Rather, it is a place that is primarily dedicated to the provision of visitor services and facilities which enable the visitor to enjoy and learn more about the natural environment while at the same time helping to control and prevent disturbance of that environment.

Housing would be limited to that required to accommodate persons (and their families) needed to serve the visitors. Commercial and institutional services would be limited to those essential for living and working there.



Traffic congestion is shown on the valley floor between the Post Hotel and the service station. About 3,200 vehicles a day pass by this point during the busy summer season.

There's something special about Lake Louise area

Lake Louise is a special and unique place which should be protected. The quality of development and the management of services and facilities to be provided should be guided by an overall theme that identifies Lake Louise as an interpretive recreation centre utilizing and telling the story of its unique environmental resources. Such an identifiable theme would set the tone for programming interpretive and visitor services, site planning and design guidelines and determination of the types and numbers of facilities to be developed. This theme would most appropriately identify Lake Louise as the interpretive centre for learning more about the various aspects of the Canadian Rockies with particular emphasis on the Lake Louise area itself.

Preliminary Ideas and Options

A number of options for what, where and how the development is to take place remain to be assessed. The options presented below are based on some fundamental concepts that require review and discussion by Parks Canada and the public in the weeks ahead.

Interpretive Programs

A key element in establishing a theme and making it operational and meaningful is the extent to which the interpretive services can be integrated with the land use planning and the development decisions that will follow. Programs can be developed and supported from the resources of Parks Canada, the business community, and the non-profit recreation and conservation groups across Canada. Together they can be involved in planning, delivering services, providing information, building and operating facilities, and promoting proper use of the park.

Plans for visitor services and facilities at Lake Louise

should recognize the particular requirements of at least four different categories of visitor:

- **Lake Visitors:** Those who come to the area primarily to visit the lake, many of whom are day visitors who proceed on to Jasper, Banff, Yoho or farther.
- **Vacationers:** Those who vacation in Lake Louise overnight or for longer periods at motels, hotels, hostels, and nearby tent and trailer sites.
- **Special Activities:** People who come to Lake Louise for particular recreational activities, i.e. mountaineers, skiers, backpackers, fishermen, naturalists.
- **Highway Services:** Those who stop off at Lake Louise enroute along the Trans-Canada Highway for roadside services.

Interpretive programs would involve various packages of services and specific kinds of facilities to support the different types of activities. For example, under the visitor category "Special Activities", (if deemed as appropriate uses), local ski clubs, climbing clubs, etc. would receive pre-visit interpretive packages; instructional packages (cross-country skiing, climbing, etc.); special buildings such as sportsman's lodges and equipment shops. These illustrate only a few specific ideas of what could be done with interpretive programs to enhance the theme of the visitors centre.

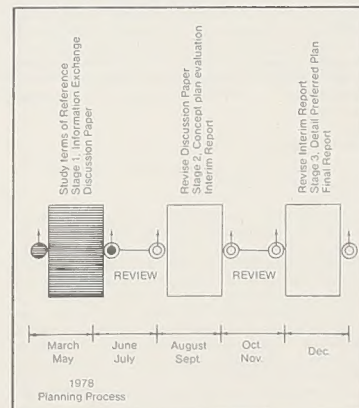
What is your reaction to the concept and have you any ideas to add?

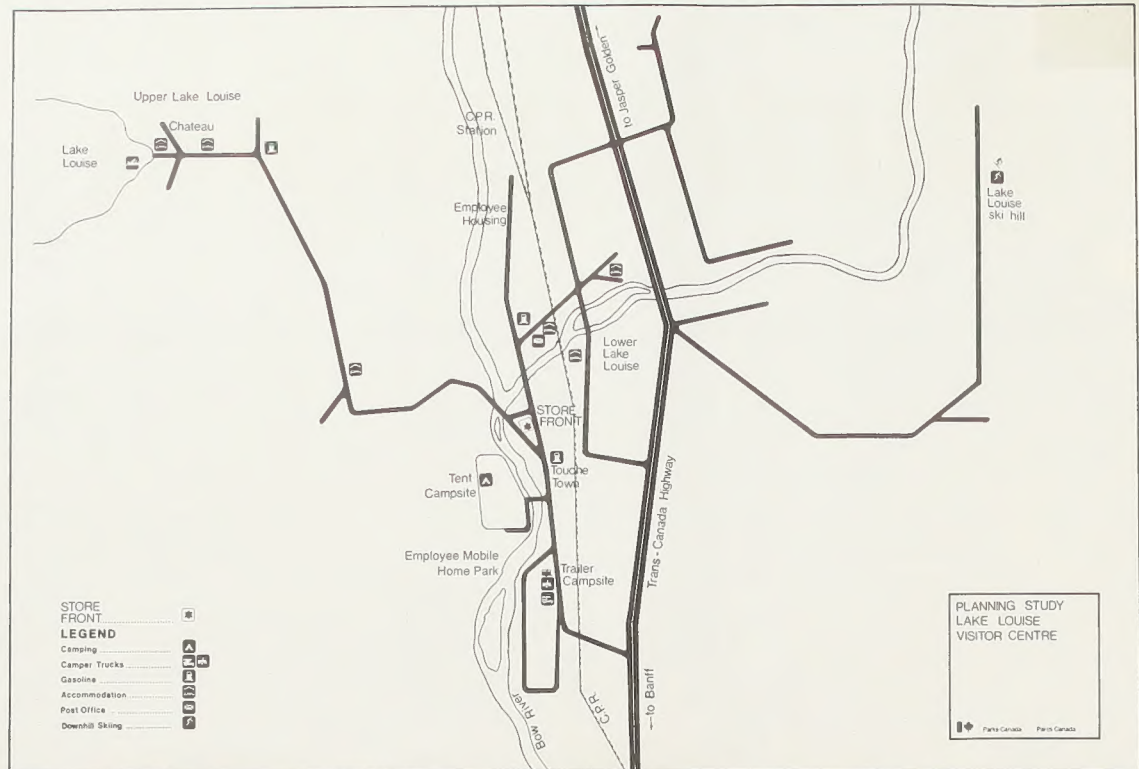
Cluster Development Pattern

Land use planning, where practical, should start by respecting existing land use patterns and examining ways for improving and strengthening them. Rather than a single place, Lake Louise should continue to develop a number of activity clusters, each with its own special character and purpose: Upper Lake Louise, Lake Louise Centre (valley floor) and the Ski Hill. Most future development would be encouraged to take place within these areas (activity clusters) through redevelopment and infill and the promotion of pedestrian-oriented environments. One suggestion for enhancing the special character of the Ski Hill cluster for example, is the development of a special interpretive centre for the enjoyment of the Lake Louise backcountry north of the valley. What are your ideas on this?

Year Round Use

A goal should be to winterize or redevelop facilities that are now capable of summer use only, so that better utilization ("Something Special" cont. Page 2)





["Something Special" from Page 1]

of existing facilities is encouraged. For example, a prime opportunity to increase year-round accommodation without more development would be for Chateau Lake Louise Hotel to operate in the winter as well as summer.

Transportation

The capacity of local roads and parking lots is a major problem and source of visitor frustration. The grade crossing of the CPR line interrupts and congests traffic flow between lower and upper Lake Louise. Suggestions for relieving this problem include linking these areas, or clusters, by transit systems as well as roads to reduce traffic congestion and to better rationalize circulation. For those primarily visiting Lake Louise to see the lake, the experience can be enlightened and less frustrating, for example, by providing adequate parking facilities on the valley floor and a convenient, enjoyable transit ride to the lakeside. This would not only make the trip more enjoyable but also more informative by providing an interpretive dialogue en route. The primary factor that would limit the number of people visiting the lake during peak (busiest) months will be a determination of the capacity of the natural environment to sustain visitor use. Further environmental and planning analyses will be required to assist in determining these natural limits. Subsequent to determining these natural limits, facilities such as parking areas and roads can be designed accordingly.

Employee Housing

One of the highest priorities is to house people now employed in Lake Louise.

It appears practical to proceed under the assumption that a certain number of families and single employees will need to be housed in the area. This need not lead to the inevitable development of a townsite if the following is adhered to. First, the number of units should be held to the minimum required to accommodate only those people having to live in Lake Louise by virtue of their employment. Secondly, their requirements for institutional and social services should be minimized by proper planning, strict control and residents' cooperation. Acceptable alternatives to individual home ownership can be found, such as local co-op associations that would develop and manage housing in which membership would be limited to those living and working in Lake Louise.

If overall principles for the development of the Lake Louise visitors centre can be agreed upon as a result of this first stage of planning, an initial housing project can be planned in the context of these principles in parallel with completing detailed land use plans. A number of particular housing types and alternative sites will be identified from a housing needs and preference study of those to be accommodated. These alternatives would be evaluated in the context of the planning in the next stage, sites will be selected and construction projects could be initiated as soon as financing is arranged.

Your ideas or solutions to the employee housing problems and shortage at Lake Louise could assist the planners.

Solutions sought to existing problems

Planning should provide a long term management plan as well as a program of near-term projects to begin solving existing problems. Examples of near-term projects to begin to solve existing problems are:

- a clean-up, fix-up program to improve the most obvious visual problems of building repair, landscape and sign control. (Parks Canada has changed many signs in the area this summer in order to improve signage)
- an initial employee housing construction program
- a pilot transit service to test ridership appeal and relieve current traffic problems during the peak summer season
- initiation of on-going surveys of visitors during each season to form a data base of user characteristics and needs
- initiation of an active interpretive program, employing the "multiplier effect" (i.e. assist the private sector to provide visitors with information and orient them to the park environment).

The concepts presented are not intended to dictate solutions to problems, but rather to *inform* the interested parties, stimulating an exchange of their ideas, and to *evolve* a common ground upon which a development program can proceed.

Some specific examples have been given to illustrate the concepts presented, however many other ideas and examples would be relevant. Parks Canada hopes readers will respond by expressing their views toward these ideas. The intention is to not only apply reader reactions to the planning process, but feed them back to those who comment in order that they may have an indication of how others have responded. For example, workshop sessions will be held in which public and private groups and individuals can come together to exchange ideas face to face and assist the consultants in finding common ground upon which to formulate more specific plans.

Response to the above may be directed to:

Lake Louise Program Manager
Parks Canada
134 - 11th Avenue, S.E.
Calgary, Alberta
T2G 0X5

Slope stability being studied

A slope on Mt. Fairview at the east end of the study area has previously been identified as having the potential to "slide". This is not uncommon in mountainous terrain. Since the location is in the area of proposed development, Parks Canada commissioned a study by consultants in 1973 to study the extent of the potential. The report stated that if a number of conditions were to develop, then there was indeed the possibility of a slide occurring. Dr. B. Leeson, Head, Natural History Research, Parks Canada, Western Regional Office, stated that these conditions could occur in the near future, or that such conditions might not occur in the next 2000 years. The consultants stated that further studies could identify corrective action that could be taken to eliminate the slide potential. The types and cost of this corrective action could not be identified until more major studies are undertaken.

Since the 1973 report, Parks Canada has been monitoring the slope. In 1974 and 1976 measuring devices could not identify any noticeable movement. Further monitoring is scheduled to be done this year. In addition, Parks Canada is engaging the services of a recognized expert to review all data they have available. This expert will recommend further action that should be taken by Parks Canada in the interest of development planning and safety.

Canadian reaction mixed to redevelopment

Participation of the public is an integral part of the overall planning program for the development of a visitor centre at Lake Louise. Comments and suggestions received from the public through public meetings, phone calls, letters and briefs, and visitations to the storefront at Lake Louise have been documented in an input chart. This chart is continually updated as additional points are brought forward by the public.

The primary purpose for compiling this information into an input chart is to provide additional basic information to be used by the consultants and Parks Canada in examining the range of factors involved in preparing a development plan for the Visitor Centre in Lake Louise and to enhance their awareness of interested individuals and groups. The input chart also serves to illustrate the diversity of opinion held by the public and enables individuals or groups to have their interest or concern documented.

The following is a summary of the comments and suggestions that have been received by Parks Canada from people during the initial stages of the current planning program. Each particular comment or suggestion has been referred to either the three consultants (IBI Group, Land Use Planning; Reid Crowther & Partners, Utilities Planning; DeLeuw Cather Canada Ltd., Transportation Planning) or Parks Canada for review. The detailed Input Chart, reflecting each particular comment, is available from the Lake Louise Program Manager, Parks Canada, Western Regional Office, Calgary and at the storefront in Lake Louise.

Terms of Reference

The questions and comments received dealt with the range and details of the terms of reference for the planning program. Some people expressed the concern that the terms of reference originally did not include the examination of areas other than the valley floor, while others felt potential development should be confined to the valley floor.

Previous Planning Studies

It was suggested that previous planning studies for the Lake Louise area be utilized, for example, by examining what

factors in these studies still hold true and which are no longer applicable.

Planning Program—General

There were various questions and comments concerning the way in which the planning consultants were chosen, the cost, planning procedures, mechanics of the program, the proposed schedule and possible extension of the planning program. Some expressed agreement and others disagreed with the types of facilities present in the area. Comments were received regarding working with recreational bodies outside the park, a freeze on further expansion after the visitor centre has been developed, recognizing the concept of a transportation corridor through the park and the use of the basic park interpretive theme in the design concept.

Visitor Centre

Defining the concept of a visitor centre at Lake Louise and its potential similarity to Banff were commented on by the public. There were various views on the requirements to live in the area, the establishment of year-round facilities, the degree of urbanization and expansion warranted. The potential management of the visitor centre was also elaborated upon.

Facilities and Services

A wide variety of facilities and services have been suggested for consideration at Lake Louise (the valley floor, the lakeside, and the ski area). These included better signage, a medical clinic, retail outlets and more campsites. There were also suggestions that Lake Louise didn't need further facilities and others commented upon limiting development in the backcountry.

Business Facilities

Other points mentioned potential business opportunities, control and management of businesses, and some of the problems related to the accommodation of staff.

Accommodation—Visitors

Some people suggested that there should be no visitor accommodation in the park, while others felt that there should be no increase at Lake Louise. The opposite point of view that there should be an expansion of visitor accommodation at Lake Louise was also received. There were also comments related to the location and type of these facilities.

Accommodation—Residents

The suggestions for residential housing dealt primarily with the type, feasibility, opportunity for equity, and location.

Utilities

The concerns about utilities presented so far include pollution, fuel systems, safety hazards and garbage collection at Lake Louise.

Traffic and Transportation

Visitors and residents indicated traffic congestion, particularly during the busy season, is of prime concern. A rapid transportation system for those accommodated outside the park and a public transit system to reduce private vehicle traffic, both on the valley floor and to the lakeside area, were points suggested by the public. Some expressed the view that the user should pay for public transit while others felt that Parks Canada should provide free transportation to the users.

Community Administration

It was suggested that Parks Canada have an administrative body situated in Lake Louise and that an advisory committee be established to decide local matters.

Railway

There were various comments related to the C.P.R.'s application to improve its mainline capacity through Lake Louise and its subsequent impact on the immediate area.

Deadlines for project are on track

Parks Canada's Lake Louise program manager, Eugene Gillespie, reports that the entire project is on schedule. "We're making progress."

Mr. Gillespie said that, "Both the Environmental Advisory Panel and the Public Participation Advisory Committee have had meetings to develop their ideas and advise Parks Canada. In addition, members of the Public Participation Advisory Committee have attended and participated at public meetings by encouraging the public to express their concerns."

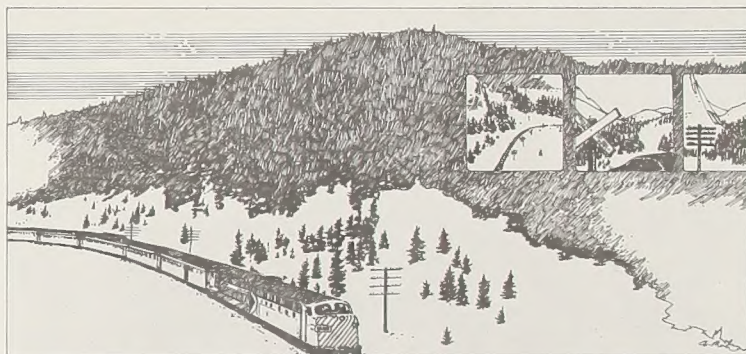
"Many environmental studies, literature reviews, and data collecting surveys have been undertaken by Dr. Leeson's staff. Some are complete while others are ongoing."

"As noted elsewhere in this publication the onsite Storefront planning information trailer has extended its hours of operation."

"At the public meetings (Lake Louise, Banff, Calgary, Red Deer) which have been held, the attendance and interest has been generally high. The consultants and Parks Canada have received important feedback from the public through these public meetings, correspondence and briefs."

"The variety of concerns that have been presented to date and the complexity of the various problems that must be addressed necessitates careful study by the consultant. They are very conscious of the possible implications of their planning and are proceeding accordingly."

Paul Lange, Superintendent for Banff National Park, said proper development of Lake Louise is a prime concern and a top priority for Parks Canada. "We have the assurance that a suitable plan will be quickly followed by actual development improvements. Parks Canada will participate to the extent its budget permits. Private developers will be encouraged to implement those parts of the plan which are appropriate to the private sector."



This is the busy CPR line, two miles west of Lake Louise. See story on Page 4 about the mainline improvements and extra track in this area.

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Further Comments—Over

Wildlife losses concern environment panel

The Lake Louise Environmental Advisory Panel submits the following report. "The panel recognizes the urgency of improving the structure and quality of existing development at Lake Louise. At the same time, we want to ensure that the world famous environmental resources of the Lake Louise region are maintained or restored in those cases where degradation has occurred. We want to ensure that any redevelopment or development which takes place will have a minimum environmental impact and will enhance the visitor's experience of the natural resources of the Lake Louise region.

"Given our limited exposure to environmental concerns related to planning the Lake Louise visitor's centre, we can identify the following areas that will require answers:

1. We strongly support the concept that the Lake Louise visitor's centre serve a major interpretive function. This could become the dominant theme of the development.
2. We recommend that wildlife losses which have already occurred in the Lake Louise region be documented as well as possible and that rehabilitation be considered.
3. The committee is concerned and will act upon protecting

wildlife values which exist in this region. At this time, we can identify potential conflict with certain rare species such as grizzly bear, wolverine, fisher, osprey, eagles and falcons found in the region. Preliminary data indicates that there is significant grizzly bear habitat north and east of the Trans-Canada Highway near Lake Louise. Non-winter uses of this area, which include the ski slopes and nearby benches could generate conflict with the rare and dangerous grizzly bear.

4. The committee is concerned about the potential environmental impact of possible greater control over natural environmental processes in the Lake Louise region. Any changes regarding fire management, flood control, or avalanche control must be carefully evaluated in terms of ecological impact.
5. Water and air quality and solid waste management should each be maintained or improved to the highest feasible standards. Standards and techniques employed at Lake Louise should serve as examples of effectiveness, perhaps to be emulated elsewhere in Canada.
6. Noise levels in the valley floor give serious cause for

concern. Plans should be developed to improve this situation. Future twin tracking of the C.P.R. should take noise abatement into consideration.

7. All reasonable development and redevelopment options should be considered and presented as options to the public. This must include examination of the no-growth option as well as several growth options.
8. In order to be able to evaluate growth or redevelopment options, a concise analysis of trends in visitor use is needed. An analysis is also needed regarding the potential of competing development outside of the park.
9. Specific proposals are needed regarding techniques for controlling growth. Related to this, a precise definition of "essential services" will be required.
10. We believe that there may be some merit in exploring a development option where the crown owns the building and leases retail space to concessionaires to carry out specific functions. A system similar to this is operational in United States national parks. It allows the Crown to maintain stricter control over visitors than do present policies."

Planning area expanded

The Terms of Reference which form part of the consultant contracts and which provide direction to them in their work is subject to change when considered advisable by Parks Canada.

The initial Terms of Reference provided to the consultants directed that all new overnight accommodation should be planned for the valley floor only.

Initial studies under this project have indicated that a more viable plan may be prepared if areas other than the valley floor were to be considered for some of the visitor accommodation development and related facilities. In addition, numerous public comments received to date have requested that other areas also be considered for some development.

In response to the study findings and public input, Parks Canada is changing the Terms of Reference for the consultant and directing that the consultant:

- a) Should expand the study to such an extent as to permit an investigation of the feasibility and advisability of utilizing other areas (such as the Lakeside or the ski area) for future development
- b) The valley floor will continue to be considered as the prime area for most visitor facilities and as the core of the visitor centre
- c) The consultant will not be required to provide in-depth site layouts for these other areas but must advance his investigations to a stage sufficient to prove their viability as an option for development
- d) The maximum number of additional accommodation facilities that are to be permitted in the visitor centre remains at that which will accommodate 1,900 additional visitors. Some of these may be identified on the valley floor and some in other areas, but in no case is the 1,900 to be exceeded in total.

CTC approves extra track for CP Rail

On August 2, the Canadian Transport Commission gave approval to Route C.

The C.P.R. has announced its desire to improve grades through the Lake Louise area in order to improve its service. Two feasible routes were identified as the result of their studies. One, which is referred to as Route "F" would have permitted removal of the existing line and rail facilities from the valley floor and have placed them on the side hill of the valley between the Trans-Canada Highway and the ski area.

The other feasible route, called "C" would result in leaving the existing line in place and putting an additional track parallel to the existing line from the Pipestone River crossing west. This additional track would be at an increased grade.

The C.P.R. made application to the Canadian Transport Commission for permission to build Route "C". This route was estimated to cost about \$9 million less than the cost of building Route "F". Public hearings were held at Lake Louise from May 15 to May 22, 1978. These hearings were called by the Canadian Transport Commission for the purpose of considering CP Rail's application. The public and interested groups were invited to submit briefs in support or opposition. There was considerable opposition from some local businessmen who indicated they would support an application for approval of Route "F" but were opposed to Route "C" being approved.

Dr. Bruce Leeson, on behalf of Parks Canada, presented a brief that opposed the application being considered on environmental grounds. While Parks Canada is opposed to both routes, it was previously stated that if the Canadian Transport Commission, in weighing all evidence, deems it is in the national interest to approve rail improvements, then Parks Canada would prefer to see Route "C" constructed. Environmental studies have indicated that the construction of Route "C" would have less adverse effect on the environment of the area than the construction of Route "F".

Storefront helps visitors to get involved

The public participation storefront (on-site planning information exchange centre) began its operation at Lake Louise last January. The main reasons for establishing the storefront are:

- to provide information about the role of National Parks and the Lake Louise area as a visitor centre, and to provide updated information of the ongoing planning programs
- to inform the public of a development plan currently being prepared for the Lake Louise area and to demonstrate how interested people can become involved in the planning program
- to gather and relay public comments and suggestions to the consultants and Parks Canada staff
- to offer the storefront as a place for small meetings.

To accommodate enquiring visitors, the storefront is now open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays and from mid-day to 8 p.m. on weekends.

The summer program for the storefront includes talks in the campgrounds regarding the planning program and how people can become involved; updating the displays and audio visual presentations at the storefront; arranging special meetings and tours to examine specific aspects of the planning program; setting up a display at the lakeside area parking lot for people to easily obtain information and to give Parks Canada their comments; and organizing open house meetings during the summer months.

Residents brief Hugh Faulkner

An indication of the importance that the Honorable Hugh Faulkner, minister responsible for Parks Canada, attaches to the future of the Lake Louise area was shown May 4, 1978 when he met various individuals and groups who are directly connected with the development planning project in order to seek advice and share his thoughts with regard to the future of this area.

He took the time to be briefed by Parks Canada officials and the consultants who are working on the project.

Members of the executive of the Lake Louise Community Association presented and discussed a number of issues that were of concern to their organization.

The Environmental Advisory Panel for this project discussed their objectives and concerns.

Similarly, members of the project's Public Participation Advisory Committee informed the minister with regard to the scope of the public participation program that they felt was necessary in order to seek valued public input.

On May 5, Mr. Faulkner held a press conference at which he restated his desire that meaningful dialogue be held with the public during the planning process. He encouraged those who would provide alternate development outside the national parks in order that development in the parks might be limited and thus protect the parks.

This series of meetings with those involved with this project is not the first such meeting the minister has attended on the subject. In recent months Mr. Faulkner has visited the area and met various concerned groups including businessmen and environmentalists.